

Floating In a Coffin

by Rhondda Lake

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Summary: After "Quagmire" Scully dreams...

Floating In a Coffin

Disclaimers: CC owns them all. I'm just borrowing them for a short excursion into insanity.

Third season spoilers. Follow up to Quagmire. If you don't get the references or the title go out and read Moby Dick.

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She was running, chasing something through the trees. It took her a moment to recall what she was chasing. Queequeg was just ahead of her, and she couldn't quite catch the leash. She ran and tried to focus the beam of her flashlight on the place she last saw him.

There. She saw him now, Mulder's back. He was wearing his leather jacket and she called his name with the same desperate tone she had used to call after her dog. Something bad was up ahead, lurking in the trees.

She saw the handle of Queequeg's leash and she managed to grasp it. Queequeg whimpered and there was a tug on the leash. Her flashlight didn't seem to want to penetrate the inky darkness, the dense foliage ahead of her. Then the leash began to reel in. She didn't want to look. She didn't want to see the torn, bloody collar. But her eyes were drawn to the end of the leash, forced there, to confront the inevitable.

At the end of the leash was a shredded badge wallet, speckled with blood.

Dana Scully began to scream.

She found herself afloat in a small row boat. No, it wasn't a

rowboat, it was a coffin. The same grey, satin lined coffin they'd used to bury Melissa. The water sloshed against the sides of the coffin, and she looked out over the vast expanse.

Things were floating in the water. Bodies. Her eyes filled with tears and she wanted to get away, but there was no oars, nothing to use but her hands. She leaned slightly over the side and dipped one hand into the water, anything to get away from the floating corpses. Something brushed against her fingers and she jerked her hand back. It was her father. Dead, bloated from floating at sea, yet his face was perfectly clear. Not composed, not restful. It was a mask of disappointment.

Dana sobbed when she noticed Missy's body float by. Her corpse opened it's eyes and looked at her, accusing. Other bodies she recognized. Clyde Bruckman, Lucy Housholder, A prostitute with her hair shorn and missing fingers...

She felt the heaves start, and she was forced to lean over the side to vomit. But nothing came up. Something moved beneath the surface of the water, it was floating up from the depths and becoming more and more distinct. It was Mulder. His arms floating out to the sides, his face turned up to her. His flesh white and she knew, she just knew he was dead. He had ceased to rise from the depths, and she was grateful, until she saw why. His feet were tied to a tether. And below him was the great mass of the whale. He was bound to it, it had killed him. His arms floated up, seeming to beckon her to leap in and join him in the cold, peaceful darkness.

She sat up with a gasp, clutching the bedsheets to her chest. Her eyes turned to her bedside clock. 3 am. She forced herself to relax and lay back down. The nightmare was still vivid in her mind.

There was no small furry form sleeping at her feet tonight, to cuddle against her and ease the loneliness. She was truly alone in her apartment, and she couldn't quiet the hammering of her heart.

Heedless of the time she reached for the phone and hit the first autodial button.

One ring. Two, Three... "Mupher."

She released the breath she wasn't quite aware she was holding.

"Morning captain."

"Is it?" His voice was much more distinct now, he woke up quickly. "What time is it Scully?"

"Two minutes after three."

He grunted into the phone. "Must have been a bad one. How did I go?"

"What makes you think it had anything to do with you? You just want to think that I dream about you." She smiled. The banter was calming her already.

"So what was it about?"

She sighed. They only called each other at these hours when they were home for business or because of nightmares.

"I was floating in a coffin."

She heard a soft chuckle. "Wouldn't Queequeg's coffin be a bit small to keep you afloat?"

She didn't want to smile. She missed her little friend terribly. But... she smiled. He couldn't see it. He could usually make her smile. It was a game really, trying hard not to laugh at his twisted jokes. Then the nightmare returned to her thoughts and the smile faded.

"I think it was Missy's coffin." She whispered softly.

"Ouch. That's not all is it?" His voice carried his concern.

"No. Bodies were floating all around me, and yes, damnit, you were there. Dead and strapped to a whale."

"Maybe you shouldn't have tried re-reading Moby Dick before going to bed." His voice teased.

Her eyes fell guiltily to the leather bound volume on her dresser.

"Maybe I'm just tired." She didn't mean sleepy. The long pause on the other end of the phone let her know he knew it.

"Do you want me to come over?"

"No. No, don't worry Mulder. I'm not leaving. I guess it just gets to me sometimes. Sometimes it just seems to hurt too much."

Silence. Then a deep breath. "Yeah, I know. Me too... sometimes. But I can't give up. At least not until I get that pegleg."

She smiled again. "And I'll probably be the one to have to put it on you."

"So tell me, you said I'm Ahab." There was a hint of pain there. "Why haven't you jumped ship before now?"

"Shortage of life boats and the coffin is too small. Good night Mulder."

"As you so aptly pointed out, it's morning Scully."

"Not for another four hours for me. I don't think I'll have another one tonight. Thanks."

"Sure. Any time."

She hung up and lay back, staring at the shadow shrouded ceiling.

Why didn't she jump ship? Because it had become her whale hunt too?

In part. Or maybe she was hoping she could sever the line in time, before the whale drug the Captain down with it, or to join him so that he didn't face the cold deep alone.

She looked at the book on her nightstand. Old and worn, but comforting and familiar. "I love you Ahab."

She whispered it into the dark. But whether it was to the spirit of her father or to another.. even she didn't know.

The End.

End
file.